

# HAVING IT MADE & THROWING IT AWAY

by David Lee Burris

Now let me get these lemon poppy  
seed lemon muffins in the oven  
and I'll be right back  
and fix you  
a nice bowl  
of stew.



TheBackPew-Manson


AND ESAU RETURNING FROM HUNTING WA SOOOO HUNGRY HE TRADED  
HIS BIRTH RIGHT BLESSINGS FOR A BOWL OF STEW. **GE 25:25-34**

# Taking For Granted In The O.T.


## TWIN SONS OF ISAAC & REBECCA

### JACOB & ESAU


GENESIS 25:21-26



**ESAU**  
Father of the Edomites



**JACOB**  
Father of the Israelites



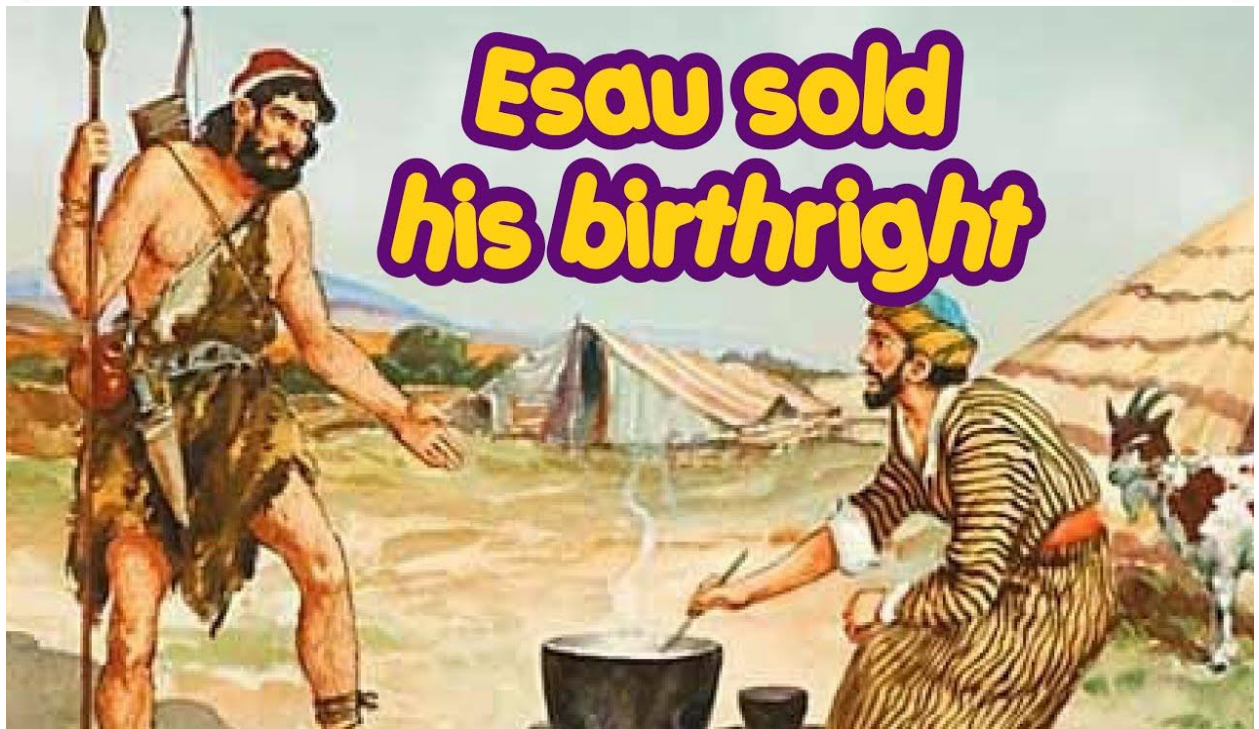
**GENESIS 25: 25-26** And the first came out red, all over like an hairy garment: and they called his name **Esau**. And after that came his brother out, and his hand took hold on **Esau's** heel; and his name was called **Jacob**:

**ROMANS 9:13** \* AS IT IS WRITTEN **JACOB** HAVE I LOVE BUT **ESAU** HAVE I HATED\*.

### TWO NATIONS SEPARATED AT BIRTH.

**GENESIS 27:39-39** "Behold thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and dew of the heaven above, and by the sword shalt thou live, and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall come to pass when thou shalt have dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck".

**GENESIS 27:28-29** "Therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven and the fatness of the earth and plenty of corn and wine let people serve thee and nations bow down to thee: cursed be everyone that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee".





## *Carpe diem*

Genesis 25:29–34

In *Julius Caesar* Shakespeare has Brutus say, ‘There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune; omitted, all the voyage of their life is bound in shallows and in miseries.’ He meant that hugely significant results can flow from a chance opening being seized at the right time. Nowadays, we would talk about a ‘window of opportunity’. Of course, important decisions need to be thought through and—for the Christian—prayed over. But delay the decision-making and the chance may slip by, never to pass this way again. The Latin expression *carpe diem* warns against an overly cautious approach to sudden openings when the situation demands an urgent and determined response. It means ‘seize the day’.

Certainly, Jacob saw his opportunity and grabbed it with both hands, just as his infant hand had grabbed his brother’s heel. The manner in which he did it was mean and exploitative, but he was right to place such a high value on what he snatched from Esau’s grasp. And Esau is condemned in the Bible for what he so feebly relinquished.

## **CONTRASTING CHARACTERS**

Esau was a skillful hunter. There is a degree of speculation in the following comments, but there are persuasive grounds for taking the view that he liked hunting and was good at it. The outdoor life was for him. The challenge of a chase was intoxicating and, for Esau, there was nothing better than pitting his wits against a wild animal, tracking it for as long as it took and returning home triumphant.

This was no social pastime but an intense self-appointed struggle of man against beast. In every sense he was a man's man, a sporting hero, a rugged and solitary individual who preferred his own company and the open plains to the devious little psychological games that he probably associated with human society, and particularly with his own family.

Jacob, on the other hand, was a home-loving man. If Esau was outside digging out a tree stump, Jacob was inside, peeling the carrots. To introduce a modern analogy, imagine the two of them playing sports. Esau would be a mud-spattered burly prop, enjoying nothing more than bringing an opponent to ground with a crunching tackle, only to embrace him sportingly at the end of the game. Jacob would be out on the wing, with pristine kit and clean knees, desperately trying to avoid any kind of action. If an opponent ventured too near, he might be minded to stick out a leg and trip him up.

A past generation of commentators had no trouble finding fault with Esau at this point, and plenty to admire in Jacob. Esau's hunting was seen as indulging his passion for sport. It showed that he lacked the discipline of the cultivator and the herdsman who needed to grind out a living from the land year after year. In their minds, Jacob not only possessed that kind of self-discipline, but he also loved the contemplative, spiritual life and much preferred books to hunting.

The world has changed in a huge number of ways, not least in its assessment of human values. In today's society there is little doubt that people would identify far more with Esau and dismiss Jacob as a pitiable 'geek'.

So, which of the brothers should be admired at this point? That is not difficult to answer: neither of them in particular. They were what they were, and it is not a matter of admiring one and castigating the other. The question for us, as it was for them, is what we do with our God-given characters and dispositions.

## **THE DAY THAT DEFINED DESTINIES**

One day, everything was to change. It may have dawned a day much like any other day, but during its course a brief exchange of words between the brothers took place and the future shape of history turned. If ever there was to be a defining day, this was it.

The consequences of that day for both men were enormous and would reverberate throughout their lives and down into history, both secular and spiritual. Jacob saw that this was his day. And he seized it.

## **FAILURE IN THE FIELD**

The background to the events of that day is the failure of Esau in the field. On this particular occasion he had caught nothing. All his efforts and energy had been fruitless; he trudged home empty-handed. More than that, he was in a foul mood. Hungry and dispirited, he arrived home to find Jacob cooking some stew on the stove (v. 29).

## **ORDERS IN THE KITCHEN**

Esau was the stronger and more dominant of the two sons. You can tell that in the way he barked out his orders to Jacob: 'Let me swallow some of that red, that red there!' (see v. 30). No friendly greeting. No concern about what Jacob might eat now that Esau was about to take his meal from him. And certainly no 'Please may I have some.' Instead, just a spluttering demand for 'some of that stuff over there'. He did not even bother to attempt a name for the food Jacob was cooking. It was a red-brown lentil stew, but for Esau it was just 'red'. It was a bit like someone at your meal table asking for the 'purple' and wanting the beetroot passed across.

Red was Esau's color. Aside from this incident it was his own natural coloring and it also reflected his fiery temperament. It explains why he was called Edom, which means 'red'. In years to come he would settle in a barren area of the Middle East known for the reddish-brown tincture of the rocks and he would give his name to that territory: Edom (v. 30).

## **JACOB'S PREPARATION**

The scene was now set. Esau may have been the more domineering and physically assertive of the two sons, but Jacob was streets ahead of him in guile. It may have seemed like a fortuitous opening that chanced his way, but we should not think that Jacob had not foreseen this day and prepared for it. On the stove the stew was simmering away, but Jacob had been cooking up this little scheme for some time. He knew this day would come, although he had no idea when that would be. He just had to be ready.

**The point is that Jacob was fully aware that Esau cared nothing for the birthright. In all probability, everyone knew it. Esau was never one to hide his innermost feelings. He felt that he was perfectly entitled to his thoughts and opinions and there was no reason whatsoever to be secretive about them. So, if he wanted the freedom to be his own man, and considered that the outside help of others was wholly unnecessary, what was the problem in telling others? He did not need a foot up in life, whether from his family or from God himself. For Esau it was purely a matter of chance that he happened to be born a matter of minutes before Jacob. So, the birthright was neither here nor there. He could take it or leave it.**

So, when Esau demanded the 'red', Jacob's plans were beginning to unfold. The next words to fall from Jacob's lips had been rehearsed in his mind over and over as he prepared for this moment: 'First sell me your birthright' (v. 31). In other words, Esau could have his 'red' just as soon as he agreed that Jacob was to have the rights of the firstborn.

## THE VALUE OF A BOWL OF SOUP

There was no sense here in which Esau was being duped. Jacob set out the deal fairly and squarely: he would trade his meal for Esau's birthright. It was ridiculously cheap and perhaps insulting, but what else could Jacob offer? He prized the birthright and would undoubtedly have been willing to give a lot more in exchange, but what else did he have that Esau would have wanted? Esau cared for nothing but the immediate gratification of his hunger. So, bowl of soup it was.

**Jacob's actions were exploitative and mean, but not deceitful. That would come later. However, what Jacob did was merely harness Esau's lack of interest in the birthright to his own ends. Had Esau ascribed any value to it at all, Jacob would have got nowhere. What happened here was that Esau's complete indifference to the things of God and Jacob's wily scheming combined to secure the deal. Calvin makes the comment that in this incident, 'God brought to light what lay hid in both.'**

## COMPLETING THE DEAL

Jacob probably held his breath as he awaited Esau's answer. He was not disappointed. Esau stumbled his way through a hastily thought-up justification. 'Look, I am about to die ... What good is the birthright to me?' (v. 32).

He drew upon a truth we would all acknowledge: that a dying man in the desert, if given the option, has little choice but to give his entire wealth for a life-saving drink. However, Esau was not dying. The meal he was about to enjoy would stave off his hunger, but it was a ridiculous exaggeration to claim that it would save his life. Had he literally been at death's door, as he claimed, the deal would probably have been rendered invalid. God is just and a deal struck under duress would surely not have stood. The author of the book of Hebrews writes tellingly of Esau's godlessness that was so obviously displayed in the fact that he sold his inheritance rights as the eldest son for a single meal (12:16). The inescapable conclusion is that this was a free choice on the part of Esau. He agreed the exchange because, for him, the birthright was worth no more than Jacob's red stew.

Esau's reply about the birthright being no good to him was a clear signal to Jacob that he was willing to trade. Jacob nailed it home: 'Swear to me first' (v. 33). The deal was completed with Esau swearing an oath of agreement. The birthright was Jacob's. He happily handed him some bread and the lentil stew.

## **THE BIRTHRIGHT DESPISED**

The rest of the story is told with the utmost simplicity: '[Esau] ate and drank, and then got up and left' (v. 34). No regrets and no looking back. He simply walks away. He leaves Jacob with the washing up and with the birthright. As far as Esau is concerned, they are equally trivial and Jacob is welcome to them both.



From that point on, Esau's attitude hardened. Whereas he had previously been indifferent to his position as firstborn, now he began to despise it. Perhaps he argued vigorously, and even convincingly, for an egalitarian society in which rights and inherited wealth should be shared equally. If so, his decision to hand over the birthright to his younger brother may have seemed to some onlookers as at least being in accordance with his principles, even if it baffled them.

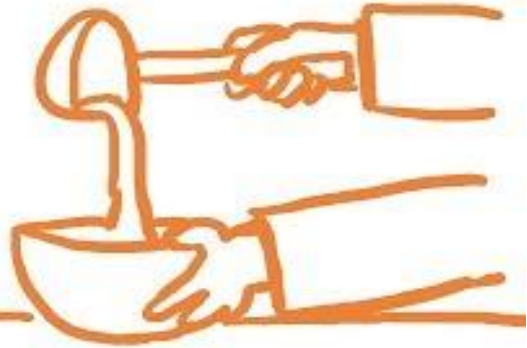
At home, though, everyone knew the real reason. This was not a rebellion against the culture of the day, but a rebellion against the God who had singled out this particular family for his own purposes. When we read that Esau despised his birthright, let's take that statement to its inevitable conclusion: Esau despised the Lord.

**What is it the world can propose?  
A morsel of meat at the best!  
For this you are willing to lose  
A share in the joys of the blessed?  
Its pleasures will speedily end,  
Its favor and praise are but breath;  
And what can its profits befriend  
Your soul in the moment of death?<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> Mackrell, P. (2014). [Face2Face with Esau: Encountering the Self-sufficient Sportsman](#) (pp. 28–35).  
Leominster: Day One.

**ESAU  
SELLS HIS  
BIRTHRIGHT**  
FROM GENESIS 25-27



**Luke 9-19**







## OUR PRODIGALS

We all have either loved, known, or been a prodigal child—someone who has rebelled against parents and God and set out on a path of destruction. Whether it's fear and worry for a young adult flinging away the faith in which he or she was raised, or the ache of a friend's midlife crisis of identity and faith, the prodigals in our lives can bring up some of the deepest questions in our own faith. The parable of the Lost Son (or the Prodigal Son, as it is also known) provides a fresh viewpoint that can help us see those prodigal children from God's perspective, bringing God's grace to calm our fears, overcome our anxieties, and soften our hearts for all those prodigals that cross our paths.

### THE PARABLE OF THE LOST SON

Chapter 15 of the Gospel of Luke begins with the Pharisees and the teachers of the law leveling a criticism at Jesus: "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them" (Luke 15:2). Jesus responds to his accusers with three stories:

PARABLE	DESCRIPTION	REFERENCE
<b>Lost Sheep</b>	A shepherd rejoices over finding his one lost sheep.	Luke 15:1-7
<b>Lost Coin</b>	A woman searches diligently until she finds her one lost coin.	Luke 15:8-10
<b>Lost Son</b>	A rebellious son is lost and then found.	Luke 15:11-32

In these powerful stories, Jesus calls the Jewish leaders to join him in the joy of finding that which had been lost. Jesus could not be any clearer: "I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent" (Luke 15:7).

Although the Jews at that time expected a Messiah who would save them from the Roman domination, Jesus had come to find the lost, those who needed God at a more basic, intimate level. Those who already had that connection with God should have desired for all others to find that connection. Jesus came to make it possible for all to come to God. This truth should have made the righteous rejoice. Instead, they were judgmental and harsh in their criticisms.





## THE FATHER AND THE YOUNGEST SON

In Jesus' third story, a father with enough wealth to own land, animals, and servants had two sons. The youngest came to him to request his share of the inheritance: "Father, give me my share of the estate" (Luke 15:12). It is a short statement that does not seem to say much about their relationship or about either one of them. However, as it was the case with all the parables, Jesus used language and experiences that his listeners could understand. They could "hear between the lines" and understand the subtle points being made.

In the time of Jesus, a father's authority was like that of a king. The children were his property, and they depended on him for financial security and social standing. Families lived together and belonged to the father's household. It was only when the father had blessed his children and then passed away that each son was able to start his own household, with the oldest son becoming the new patriarch of the clan.

In the story, the younger son was, in fact, asking for his independence, for his freedom. The younger son wanted the freedom to make his own decisions, to live his life the way he wanted—a desire that opposed the values of the culture at the time. (In Jesus' time, connection to and dependence on the family and the father was a far more important value than freedom.) The younger son's demand also meant that the younger son could not wait for his father's death, when the inheritance would have been divided. In other words, his insistence showed a lack of love for his father.

In making that request, then, the younger son dishonored his father and his father's household. He forced his father to make a difficult choice. Typically, the society of the time resolved such a problem by banishment—kicking the child out. The younger son deserved to be expelled from his father's household without inheritance or family.

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

*In our day, the search for independence is highly valued.*

*How can we continue to search for independence while at the same time remain faithful to and trustful of God's grace?*

To set the stage, Jesus tells this parable just shortly before his crucifixion. In the culture of the day, this parable was surprising at best, scandalous would be an even better description of the emotions the audience hearing Jesus's words had.

In our modern, American culture this parable has been watered down from the original story so let us take a minute to dive into the verse and the context.

The whole city is pregnant with anticipation, this could be the Messiah. The one foretold. Part of this crowd is filled with this hope, this anticipation as they listen. Jesus does not teach like anyone they have ever heard before.

But another part of the crowd -the Pharisees- are angry that Jesus is with sinners, with the "nobodies", and the undesirables, that he touches the lepers, that he allows the little children to come near him. They are already planning to kill him, he's just days from being brutally beaten and hung on a cross. This is the backdrop to this parable.

The parable of the prodigal son, comes in a passage of several parables about lostness, we find the parable of the lost lamb, followed by the parable of the lost coin, and finally the story of a prodigal son which was going to fly in the face of everything culturally acceptable, and of religious traditions.

## The Prodigal Son Bible Verse

*Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So, he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So, he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.*

This man was according to the parable well off and according to the text he is a land owner, and he has two sons. The younger son came to his father, and basically looked his father in the face and then said "Dad, I wish you were dead." You can almost hear the audience Jesus is speaking to gasp in horror? Our own stomach perhaps churns as we think of how this poor father must have felt. What this son just said wasn't done in their culture. Children were taught to honor and to respect parents. This son comes and tells his father he cares more about his father's money than he does a relationship with his father.

**He knows the cost of everything, but the value of nothing. He wants a life without the father.**



And so, his father gives him his portion and he leaves. But what the prodigal son does not realize is what he is running from, he will spend the rest of his life trying to get back to.

The word prodigal in this passage means to live outside the protective covering. To go out from under the protective covering. To come out of protective custody.

In Jewish society, pigs were considered unclean animals, and so the job of feeding pigs would have been about as low as one could get. There was nothing as vile as this. But believe it or not, he's not the one suffering in this passage. It's His parents who are back home wondering where he is. Is he safe?

We can only imagine the pain of this father watching his younger son, his pride and joy so far from the place he had raised him, turning his back on his heritage, his family, and the way he had been raised. Squandering what he'd been given, and wasting his life. The mindset that created his request, and the misery caused by his rebellion God used as a means to facilitate his return.

Perhaps you can relate to this father and the pain he must have been going through. As day after day, he prayed for the return of his prodigal son. And day after day those prayers went unanswered. His greatest desire is to see that wayward son coming back up the road.



But this father could not step into the pig pen, to bring **comfort where God was trying to bring conviction. This son had to reach rock bottom, so God could get a hold of his life and bring him back to the place he belonged. Back under His protective covering.**

If we jump in and try to rescue the prodigal, we will bring the pig pen back home with us and nothing will change. **You have to get the pig pen out of the prodigal before you can get the prodigal out of the pig pen.**

*“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I’m no longer worthy to be called your son; so, make me like one of your hired servants.’ So, he got up and went to his father.*

*“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So, they began to celebrate. Luke 15:11-24 NIV*

We miss so much of this parable because we take the principles out of this parable that don't do God's grace justice. What we don't understand is that in this culture there was a law that exists to this day, the Keziza. That if a Hebrew child were to ever do what this one did, and took his holy inheritance and then spent it on gentiles he would be cut off, to be forever put away.

The elders would sit in the city gate to watch for any prodigals, it did not happen often but as the village rulers they were prepared. **They would have a clay pot sitting next to them, and when that prodigal tried to return when he got within hearing distance of the judgment. They would pick up the pot and declare Keziza dropping the pot on the ground and letting it shatter. This prodigal would forever be cut off from his family, his home, and his heritage and could never return.**

In the Hebrew culture according to Levitical standards, the father of the prodigal could not participate in the Keziza, the mother could come and plead for the child but the father was required to stay home. In the Middle Eastern culture, it is not only humiliating but utterly unacceptable - unthinkable even, for an elder Hebrew man who is well respected, and a property owner to run. The passage says that when he saw his son he at once took off running. – *Internet Open-Source Article*

## GRACE AND REBELLION

The father's response to the younger son was unexpected: "So he [the father] divided his property between them" (Luke 15:12). The father's reaction must have provoked much confusion in Jesus' audience. It wasn't the right response. The younger son's insolence should have been met with a strong, negative reaction. But the father gave the younger son what he wanted.

The younger son left his father's house and, predictably, squandered all he had. As Jesus' listeners expected, the son's foolishness led him to a life of misery and humiliation. Eventually, his only option was to take care of pigs. Jews did not eat pork because they considered pigs unclean. For a Jew to be taking care of pigs was the ultimate degradation. The younger son had touched bottom.

But in time, the son's own suffering broke down his pride. In a moment of insight, he became wise: "I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants" (Luke 15:18–19).

### QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

*What are some ways to demonstrate true repentance and ask another person for forgiveness?*

*What does the younger son's behavior teach us about repentance?*

## AN UNEXPECTED ENCOUNTER

The son headed home, humbled and humiliated, with sorrow and newfound wisdom. Jesus' audience, the Pharisees especially, likely imagined that justice was about to be served. The father would surely act with a firm hand over his son.

However, as soon as his father saw him at a distance, the father "was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him" (Luke 15:20). Imagine, a dignified father taking off to meet his rebellious son, the one who had dishonored him and squandered his wealth! In Jesus' time, dignified people in Middle Eastern cultures did not run. Running was fit for servants, not for the masters of the home. But compassion moved the father, not justice, not revenge, not pride.

With humility and wisdom, the younger son apologized to the father. However, the father ignored his son's apology—along with his dirty clothes and body. Instead, he embraced his son and called to his servants to prepare a welcome fit for a most honored guest. Jesus made clear the father's reasoning for the celebration: "For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found" (Luke 15:24).







# **How We Take For Granted Today:**

## **Second Generation Christians**

There is a principle of degeneration which states that a weakness in any given generation tends to become more pronounced in the succeeding generations. One of the reasons why there is a law in many states which prohibits the marriage of cousins to each other is because of the high risk of deformity. in the offspring of that marriage. The physical weakness in a family becomes more pronounced when it is added to itself within the same family. Biblically speaking, weakness passed to the next generation often worsens. In the book of Judges is the revealing statement, “And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers, and there arose another generation after them who didn’t know the Lord, nor the work which He had done for Israel” (2:10). The primary generation couldn’t escape from the inevitable conclusion as seen evident in the degeneration of the secondary generation; they had been neglectful. The apostle Paul writes, “But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness” (2 Tim. 2:16).

While the sins mentioned in that verse are not here under consideration, the principle that sin leads to further sin is evident. It is also affirmed when Paul says, “But evil men and impostors will proceed from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived” (2 Tim. 3:13). Sin yields further sin.

The Hebrew writer states, “Not forsaking our own assembling together . . .” (10:25). Negligence in attendance has always been only a symptom of a more far-reaching problem: attitude. In other words, if our dedication is not as it should be and our parental example of what God means to us is lacking, our children may then adopt even lesser degrees of these vital essentials.

The evangelism of the world is often stressed; but what about our own children? What about those with whom we have the greatest influence? It is true that many have often risen above the lesser example for good of their parents, but most others constitute that sad statistic of degenerating from a weak influence for good. - *Guardian of Truth*

**“God's people have always been plagued with false teachers. The Bible gives many warnings concerning them and their evil works (cf. Matt. 7:15-27; Gal. 1:6-9; Col. 2:8-10; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Acts 20:28-32). False teachers, for the most part, would be powerless if it were not for the untaught members of the church. These individuals provide fertile ground for false teachers to do their damaging work within a congregation of God's people.**

**In speaking of the untaught, we speak of those who are ‘relatively’ untaught. For the most part, they’re those individuals who have accepted the Christian life without much study of their own. It maybe they were baptized because their friends were: or maybe it seemed like a good thing to do at the moment, or perhaps they did it to please their parents. Included in this group would be those individuals who have very little commitment to attend the services, or to study the word of God, or to engage in the local work of the congregation. They, as someone once said, ‘have just enough religion to make themselves miserable.’ They know very little beyond the first principles of the gospel. This problem with the untaught has been with the church since the days of the apostles (Hebrews 5:11; Matthew 24:12).” *Brooks Cockran***



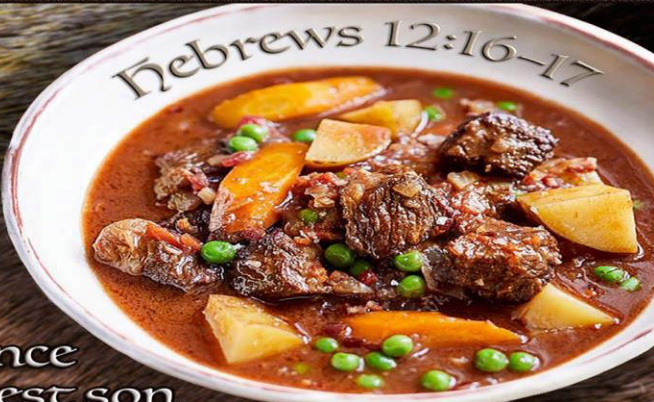
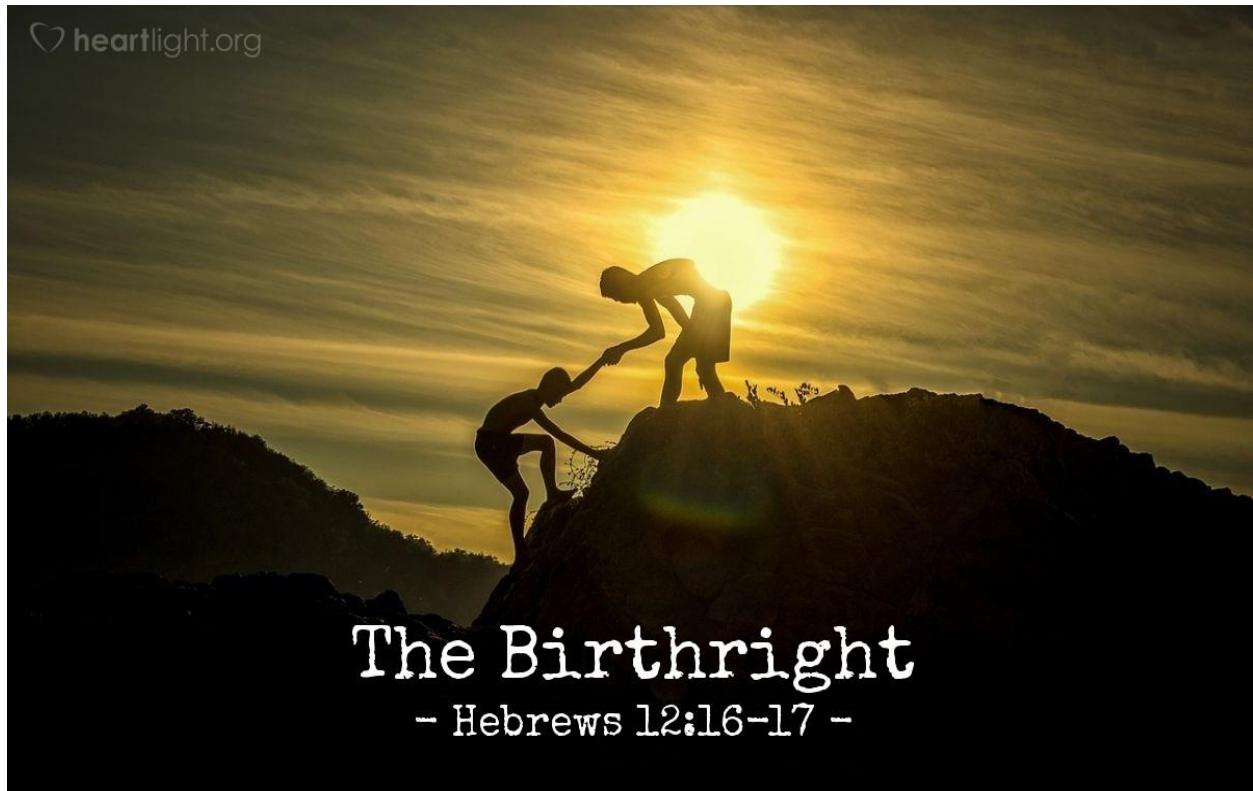
## **What will be the consequences if we allow our generation to lose these three things?**

**1. Loss of Bible knowledge will lead to a generation which views the Lord's church as another denomination. A generation will arise which doesn't see that much wrong with the denominational churches. They will consider the Church of Christ to be a denomination just like the Baptist Church, Methodist Church, and other denominations. Their speech will reflect denominational thinking like: "I am a Church of Christ." "I go to the Church of Christ Church."**

**2. Loss of Bible morality will result in the church being filled with worldly people. Congregations will become full with those who attend dances, wear revealing clothing, have been divorced and remarried for no scriptural reason, and see no wrong with social drinking, etc.**

**3. Loss of commitment will result in dying churches. Worship services will become lifeless, boring exercises in religious formality; Singing and prayers will be dead. Members will want short sermons so they can hurry up and be dismissed. Members will miss for any excuse imaginable.**

# SCRIPTURE SUGGESTS POINT OF NO RETURN



Hebrews 12:16-17

See that no one is sexually immoral, or is godless like Esau, who for a single meal sold his inheritance rights as the oldest son.

Afterward, as you know, when he wanted to inherit this blessing, he was rejected. Even though he sought the blessing with tears, he could not change what he had done.

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The author of Hebrews highlights Esau being rejected from his inheritance, but he does not indicate who it is that enacts the rejection. The audience must fill in the blank with either Isaac or God. Perhaps *both are intended*, but contextually it seems that the author wants the audience to insert the missing subject with God. It is said that Esau was not given an opportunity for repentance after selling his birthright,<sup>277</sup> and he could not gain back his birthright and blessing pertaining to it, though he sought the blessing with tears (Heb 12:17; cf. Gen 27:34, 38). The feminine “it” (αὐτήν) in Heb 12:17 may refer back to either repentance or blessing as the object Esau sought.

The advantage of the interpretation that Esau is seeking the blessing rather than repentance is twofold: 1) in Gen 27:38, after losing his birthright, Esau cries and begs his father to bless him; 2) there’s no mention of Esau seeking repentance in the story. Even so, αὐτήν is ambiguous enough in this verse to suggest that even if the author understood its reference to be “blessing,” some of his readers would be led to think it refers to “repentance.” No doubt his rhetorical agenda would be served if some of his audience would think that Esau sought diligently to repent but could not do so, even when he cried about it! The author, in any case, seems to have added the thought about repentance in keeping with his conviction that it is impossible for apostates to be renewed to repentance a second time (cf. Heb 6:6; 10:26).

Using *qal wahomer*, our author uses the lesser punishment of Esau losing an earthly “blessing” to point to a greater punishment of Christian apostates losing a heavenly inheritance: *losing one’s “blessing” involves losing one’s “birthright” as a firstborn child of God and Christ with eternal inheritance pertaining to it; all that is left for that person is final judgment (12:17, 23, 28–29; cf. 1:14; 6:12; 9:15; 11:7–8).*<sup>2</sup>

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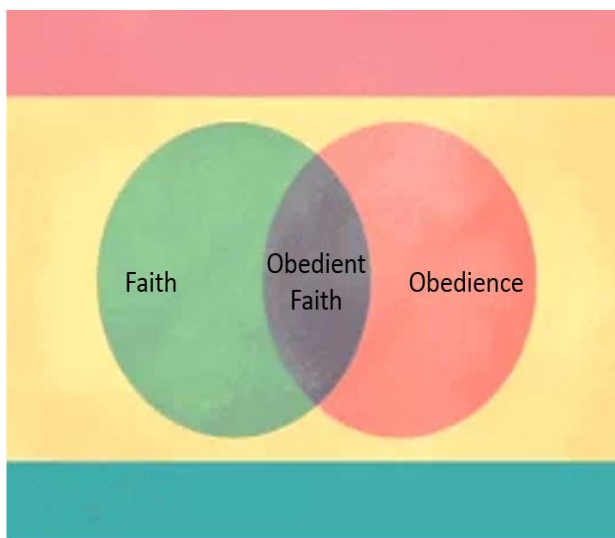
<sup>2</sup> Oropeza, B. J. (2012). [\*Churches under Siege of Persecution and Assimilation: The General Epistles and Revelation\*](#) (Vol. 3, pp. 63–64). Eugene, OR: Cascade Books.



# AT THE NEXUS OF GRACE & GLORY

## Five Steps For Saving:

- HEARING:
- Romans 10: 17; Matthew 7: 24 - 27
- BELIEVING:
- Hebrews 11: 6; Mark 16: 15, 16
- REPENTING:
- Acts 2: 38; 17: 30; Luke 13: 3
- CONFESSING:
- Matthew 10: 32, 33; Acts 8: 36, 37
- BAPTISM:
- Romans 6: 3 – 5; Acts 8: 36 – 38



*O That Will Be Glory*

2. *Who that will be glory for me, e grace,*

*I an Glory for me, glory for me; ce,*

*When by His grace I shall look on His face, e*

*That will be glory, be glory for me. me.*

